



**AMERICAN
JERK**

**PROCESS MANUAL
DREW DEURLINGTON**

AMERICAN JERK PROCESS MANUAL

PREFACE

Howdy, pardners. I was lucky enough to design the American Jerk jerky brand in Gale Okumura's Design 116: Graphic Design course at UC Davis.

In the following pages, you will observe many of my thoughts, my images, and my general design process, for the creation of the American Jerk brand. In this manual, you will find that there are three primary elements that make up the backbone of this brand:

The Logo Design, beginning on page 1;
The Graphic Standard, beginning on page 11; and
The Packaging Design, beginning on page 21.

I enjoyed working on this project, and I hope that comes through in this manual.

LOGO DESIGN

The creation and design of the American Jerk logo was a multi-step process.

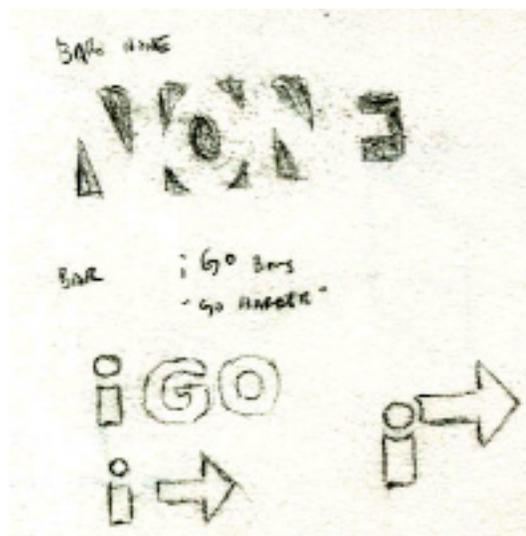
The first of these steps included the observation of other logos – specifically bad ones – and their resulting deconstruction by and the other members of my Design 116 class. From there, each student endeavored to think of a medical or dry-food product for which they would essentially build a company around. For my product, I chose long, thin strips of cured, dried meat, better known as jerky.

However, jerky was not my first thought. My ideas tended to form around foods that I enjoy eating, and my first thought was energy bars. From there I thought of creating a banana label, then jerky, then crackers, and finally potato chips. I weighed the merits of each of these ideas and sketched some of them out. Jerky and energy bars quickly emerged as the clear favorites, and of those, I was more a fan of my ideas for jerky than for bars.

For my banana label, I thought of using some sort of a cartoonish monkey. However, after drawing it, I preferred it to be the name of an energy bar. “Monkey Bars” would also include humor, which is something I love to add to my work, if at all possible.

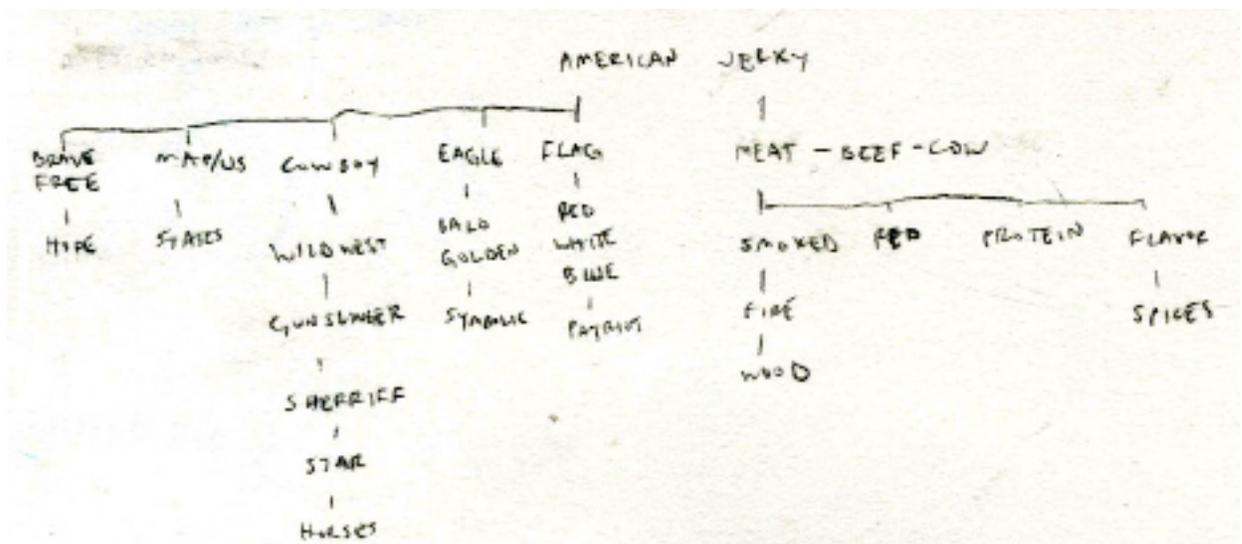


Other ideas for energy bars included “Bar None” and the “iGo Bar.” Unfortunately, I wanted to be original, and both of those names – or something similar – is in use in the “real world.”

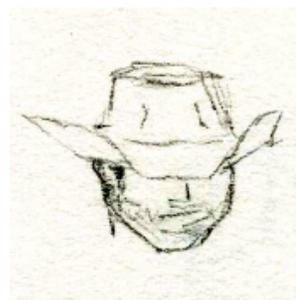


It was shortly after settling on jerky as a product that my roommate said, “Put ‘American’ in front of anything and it just sounds better.” Naturally, I’m paraphrasing, but that was his intent. Anyway, I applied his idea to my brand of jerky, and it worked. Serendipity. I checked all the major brands of jerky, and as many of the smaller ones as I could find, and found that none of them had “American Jerky” as their name.

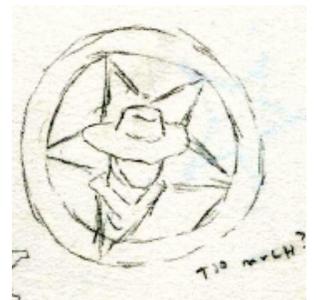
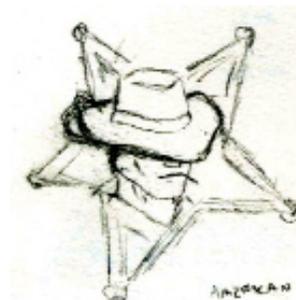
After virtually settling on American Jerky as my product's name, I did a word association game with both "American" and "Jerky," and came up with several words that could be turned into good symbols. One of these was the cowboy.



The idea for using a cowboy, or gunslinger, for my brand of jerky was one of my first ideas. I knew that eyes would not transition well to a logo as part of a face, so the cowboy always had his eyes covered by his hat. However, this cover was initially provided by the angle of the figure more than the shadow.



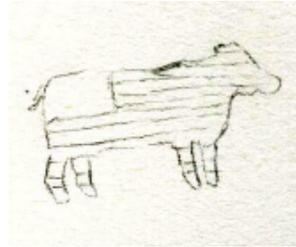
I toyed with the idea of putting a star behind my cowboy – a symbol that would emphasize the "American" in the name, as well as adding connotations of the Old West Sheriff – or just adding a significant outline.



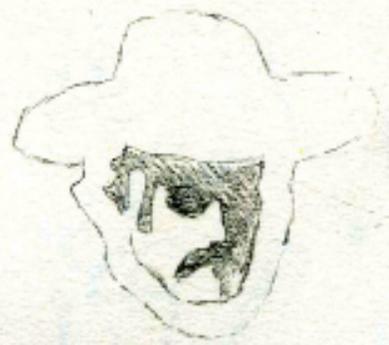
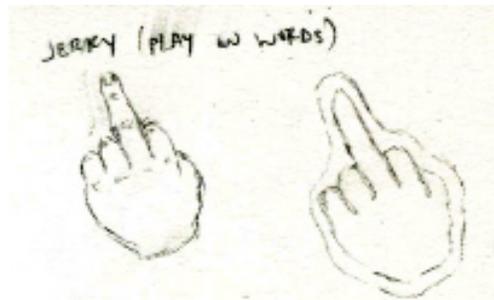
This star took on several iterations and I tried using it as a logo on its own, but it seemed too generic.

Also, using both the star and the figure was deemed to be “too much” for the logo, when used in conjunction with the figure.

I also tried some of the other symbols for American Jerky, including a bull, cow, eagle, and American Flag. Unfortunately, using an animal as a logo for an animal product seems like a poor graphical decision as well as a poor business decision.



A different route that was suggested was using a play on words for “Jerky.” I drew a fist with a raised middle finger, but that concept seemed to bold and in-your-face for the direction I wanted to go. However, that concept of the word play and being-a-jerk was eventually fused with the cowboy concept and American Jerk was born.



When initially discussing the concept of the American Jerk, the idea of an Old West villain – complete with handlebar moustache and monocle – was bandied about. I moved onto the computer and created three rough cowboys, based loosely on the visages of famous actors. In the first class-wide pre-critique, the clear favorite of the three became obvious. Also during this pre-critique, the monocle was eliminated and I was told to make the Jerk look tougher, and with a decidedly more curly moustache.



At that point, I curled his moustache and made it stick out from his face more. Then I added a series of components to make him look more villainous. First I added mutton-chop sideburns and five-o'clock shadow to give him an unshaven appearance. Then I added the bandana, something all bad-guys in the west should have (how else would they disguise themselves when robbing a bank?), and finally I added a cheekbone, which could double as a scar. The cheekbone and five-o-clock shadow were too busy for the logo, though, especially in conjunction, and they were both tried individually. It was also during these experimentations that I smoothed out the Jerk's hair and made his smirk into a frown. Unfortunately, the logo was becoming too complicated, so I erased all my additions except for the bandana, the frown and the smoother hair.





It was now that I started to combine the image with type. I had done some type studies of typefaces I thought would work well with the image. Initially, I thought of using a slab-serif, such as Memphis (3rd and 4th from top) or Rockwell (5th). However, I also noticed Rosewood Std (Top), Playbill (6th), and Mesquite Std Medium. (2nd) On a whim, I decided to experiment with some serif typefaces (8th to 11th) that could have appeared during the actual period of the Old West, but they were all too clean looking and were quickly ruled out. Rosewood, Playbill, and Rockwell all received some notice, but Mesquite was undoubtedly the most popular and that is the typeface I chose to work with.

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At first, I had believed that I would set the type on either side of the Jerk, but when I was experimenting, the vertical layout was very appealing, if only for its similarity to the classic “Wanted Poster” format. I tried both and posed them to the class. The vertical orientation was decidedly more popular, but with the caveats that additional letter spacing was needed and the text should be moved closer to the main figure.



Finally, I received a suggestion to try only showing the folds of the bandana and letting the viewer imagine it all. This negative of the bandana allowed me to move the text into the white space without losing either image or text.

After a few attempts to make the folds of the bandana look natural, I reached the final American Jerk logo, seen below.



I then started to play with spot colors to use for my logo. The way I envision the product packaging at this point is a wooden container with the logo branded into it. However, for print products, a spot color is part of the requirement.

To keep the theme of the branded image, I chose to use a simple square of brown around the black image. Here are some of my color studies.

Ultimately, I chose to go with the 3rd one down (right). It has the quality of an Old West Wanted Poster and it maintains its color when printed.

A final change to the logo was the addition of a hat band. This allowed more accessibility to the logo and made the logo less top-heavy by breaking up the bold, solid, black hat.



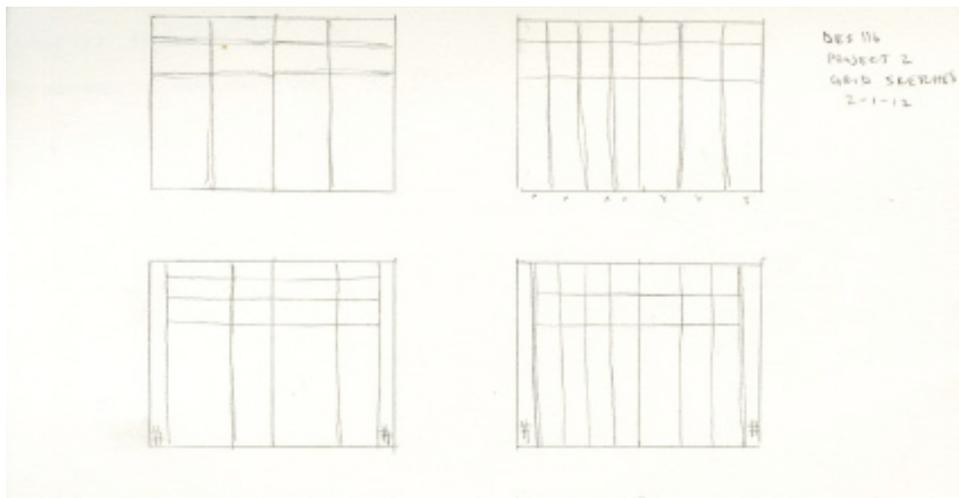


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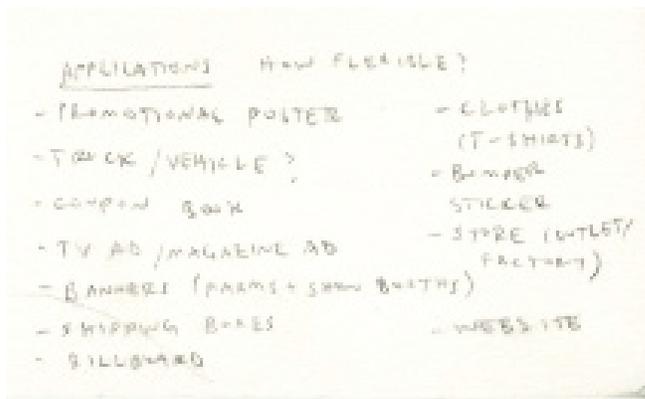
GRAPHIC STANDARD

To create the American Jerk Graphic Standard, the bulk of the time was spent on creating a solid business system. Designing the Letterhead, Envelope, and Business Card helped provide me with a solid direction for creating the rest of the elements in the Graphic Standard.

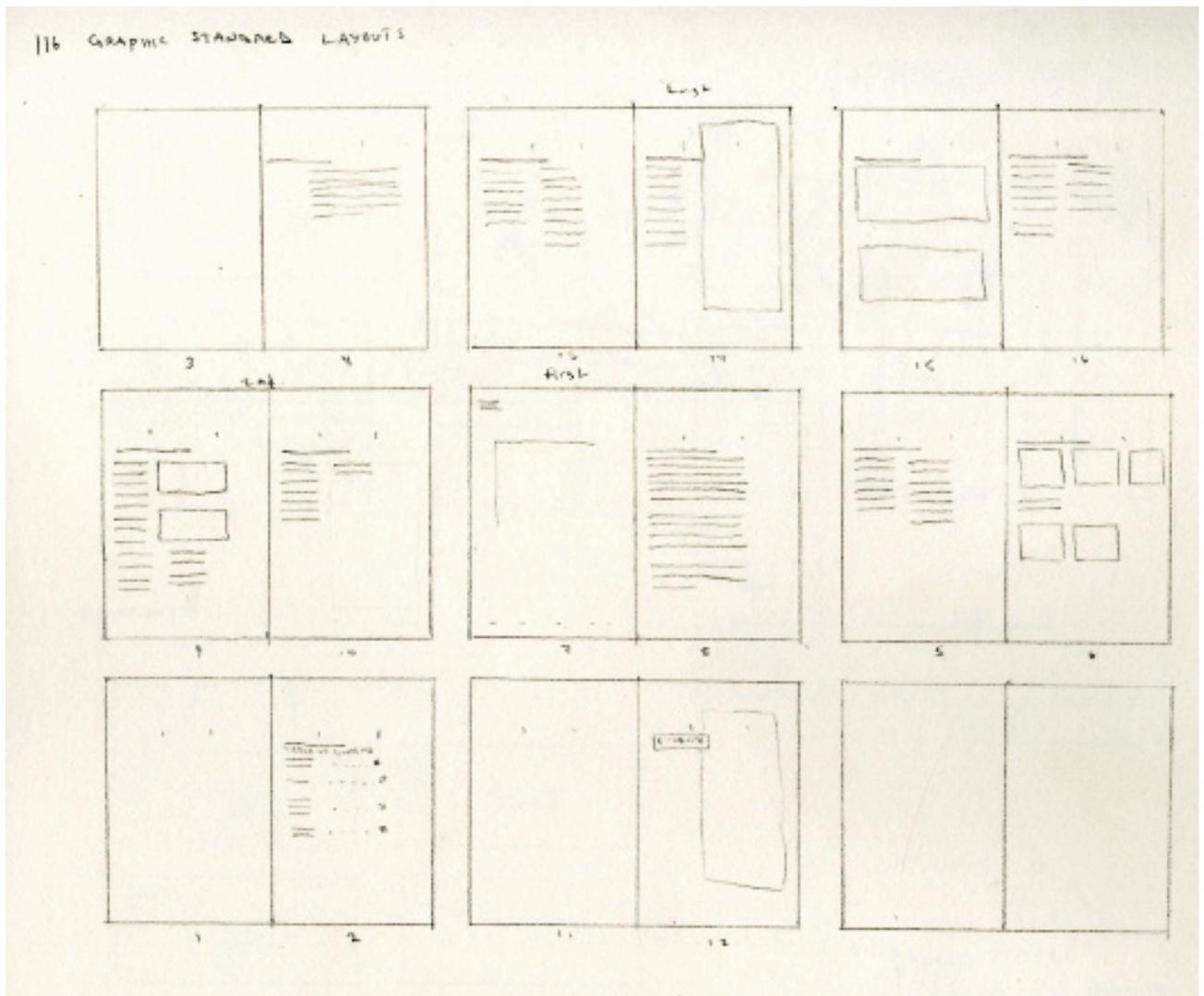
When first starting out, I focused on the grid layout that would serve as the backbone for my graphic standard. After testing out several models, I decided to use a standard three-column grid with the left margin moved away from the edge of the paper.



I then moved on to thinking of ways in which the American Jerk logo could be applied, many of which ultimately made it into the final Graphic Standard.



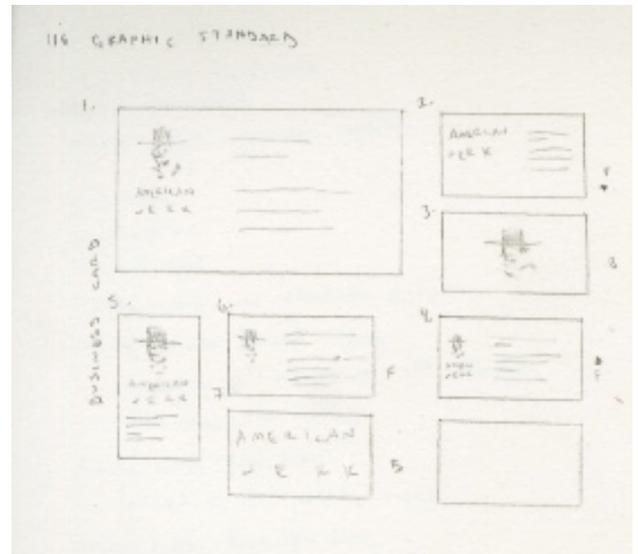
From there, I delved into the formatting of the Graphic Standard and began to enter information and graphics into my grid. Though at this point, they were only hand drawn roughs, they were hugely influential in terms of the eventual order of pages and overarching style.



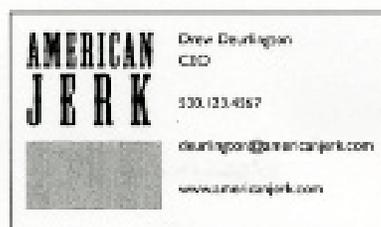
It was not until this point that I began to create images for what the business system should look like.

I began my work with the smallest of the three business system items: the Business Card. I knew the information that it should contain, but I experimented with that information anyway. I also played around with orientation and using a one-or two-sided card.

The idea of using an image of the Jerk without any text was immediately appealing, and that, paired with the exciting design possibilities of the two-sided card quickly won that battle. I ignored the orientation until later and focused on text and image-text combinations on a horizontal card.

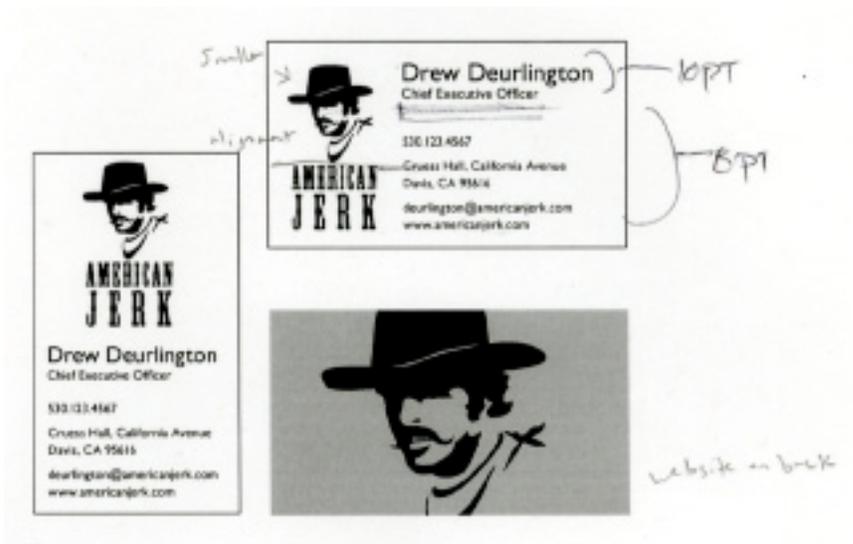


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padding



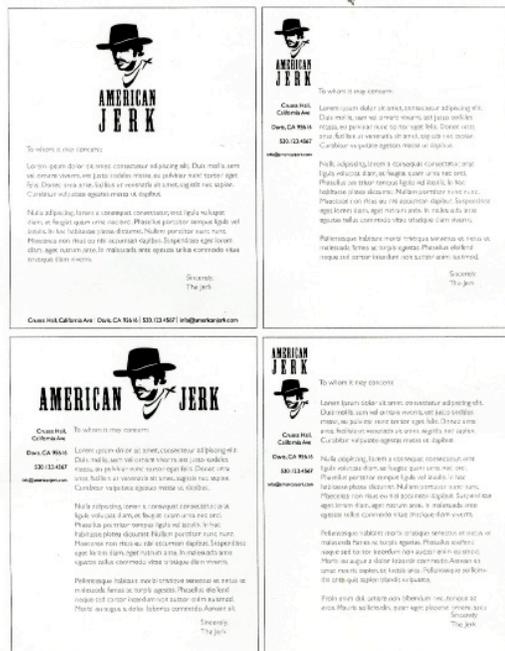
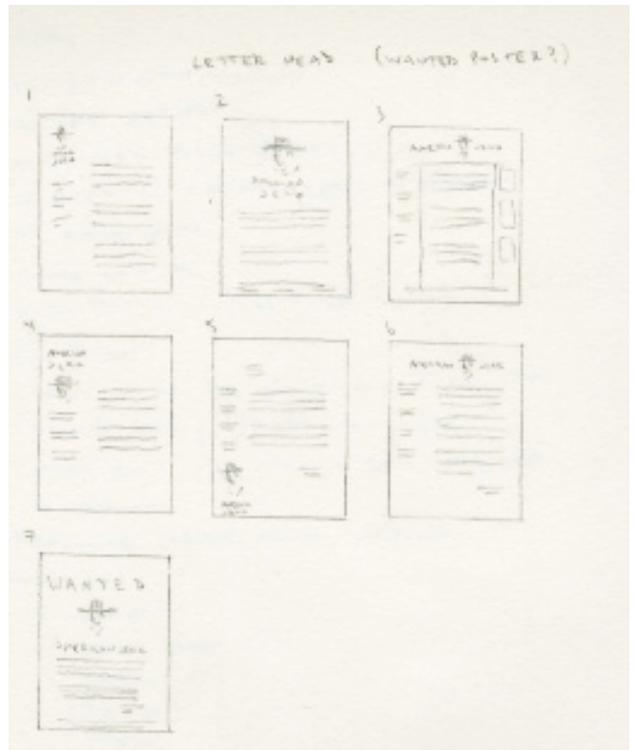
Try vertical format

When I was satisfied with a design, I decided to return to the orientation issue, and I experimented with a vertical orientation on the computer. Ultimately, though, I decided to stick with the horizontal card to which I had been drawn initially.



From the Business Card, I moved on to the Letterhead. My first thought was to try and impart an Old West feel or create a Wanted Poster. However, after my roughs, I was advised to go for the more modern feel that was in some of my sketches. I agreed with this sentiment and began to zero in on my final.

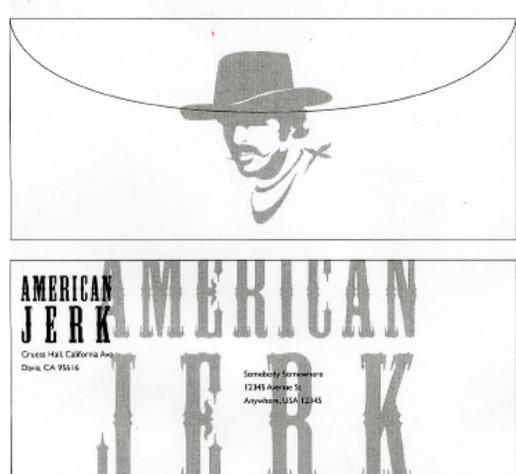
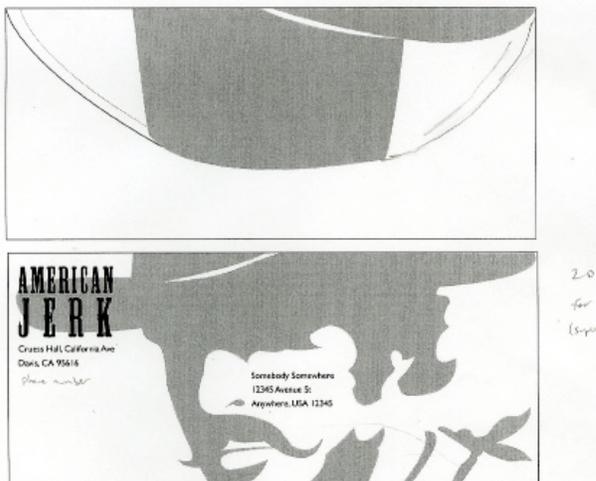
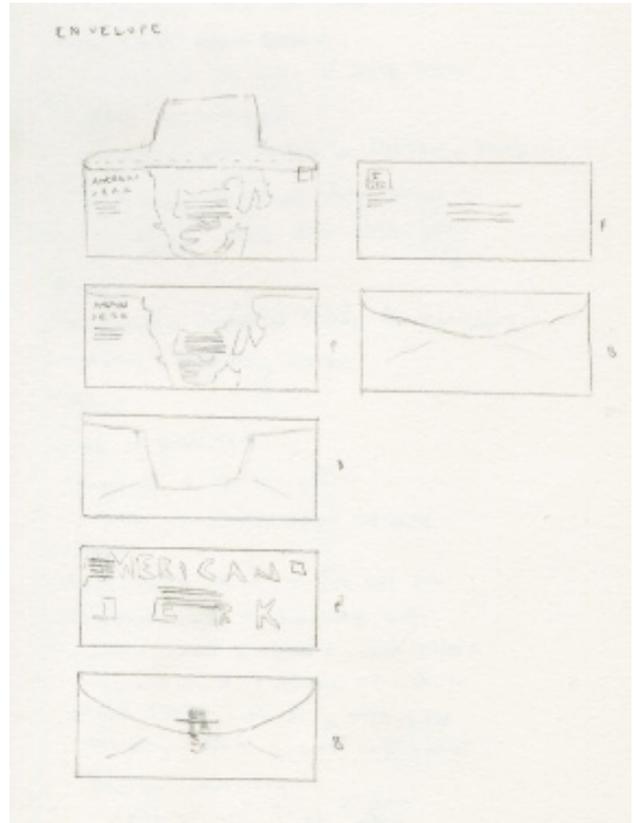
I did some experimentation with a few of the designs that were not liked as much, just to see how they looked on the computer, but mostly, I began to work out the details of my Letterhead. I tried the "American Jerk" above the Jerk and different hang lines for the body copy of the example letter. Of these, one was obviously the better of the two, and that was the direction I ended up going.



Happy with my Letterhead, I began doing roughs for the Envelope. I began with a basic, business envelope that features the logo and business information in the upper left-hand corner. This bored me.

I then veered in completely the other direction and made the logo huge. This caused the Jerk figure to wrap around the envelope, his hat forming the envelope flap. This was a concept that I liked. Not wanting to settle prematurely, though, I tried to achieve the same effect with the text in the logo, but it appeared redundant.

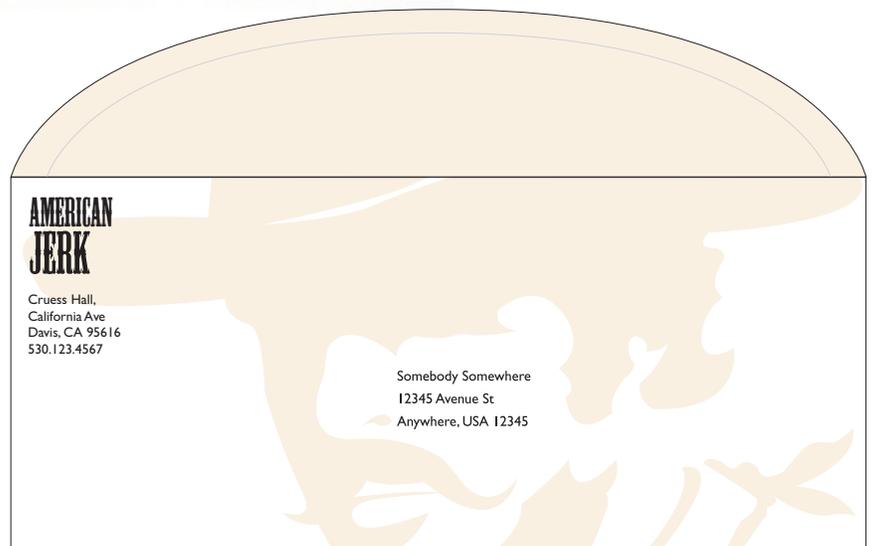
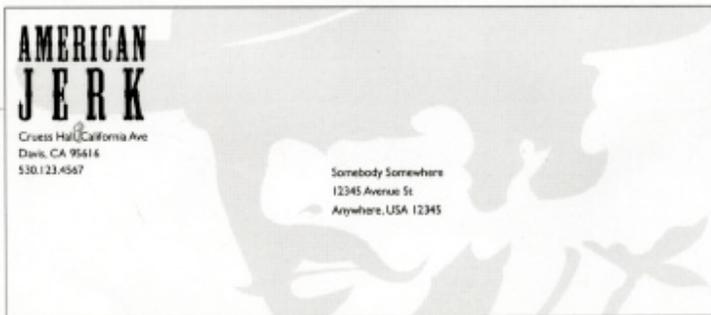
I returned to the large Jerk concept, but used a lighter version of the color to make it fade more into the background. I also made the flap continue all the way around on the back to reduce the risk of it tearing. This kept the unique shape of the hat.



However, as was pointed out to me, if the envelope was sealed, it would not look like anything recognizable from the back. This was a valid point, and I tried to rectify that issue, by simply using a regular back, albeit colored the same shade as the Jerk on the front.

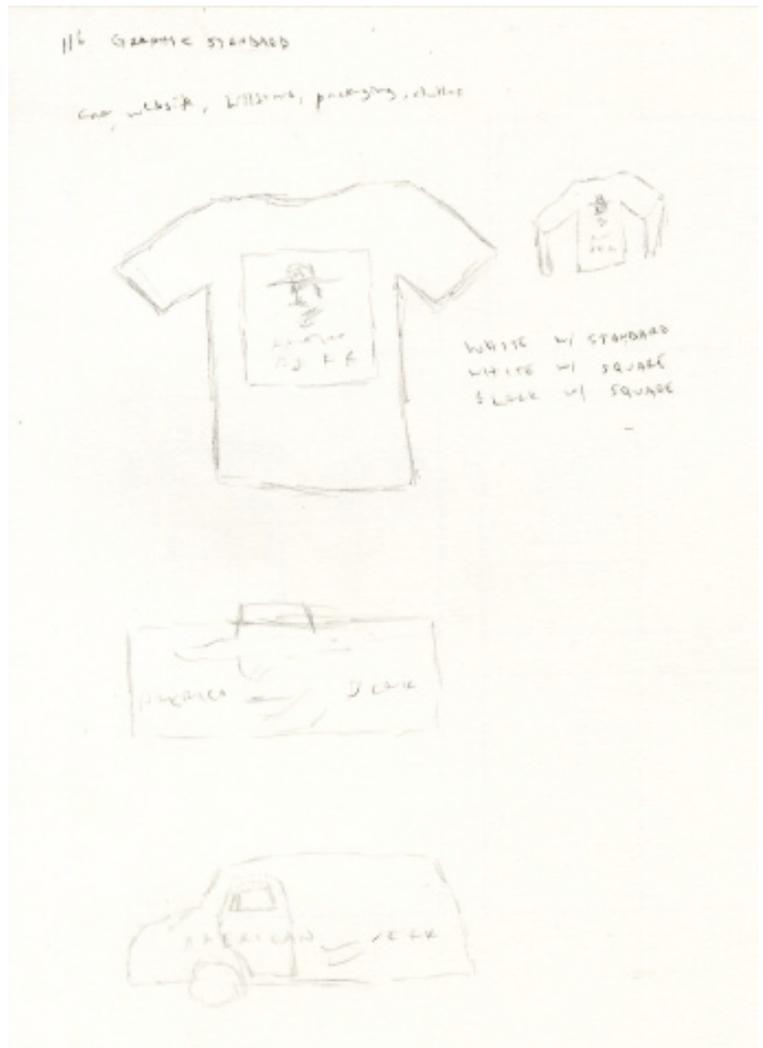


5 number



After completing my business system, I had several sound ideas on what would and what would not work in the Graphic Standard. It was relatively easy at that point to put together requirements for how the logo was and was not to be used.

The primary difficulty was choosing which specific items and elements were to be included in the Graphic Standard. Ultimately, though, I feel that the elements that were included are successful in showing the framework for the diversity and capabilities of what American Jerk can do as a company.



PACKAGING DESIGN

From the beginning, the packaging for American Jerk beef jerky was designed to be a different way of delivering jerky.

The process for designing the unique jerky packaging for American Jerk began with simple observations of the current packaging employed by other jerky brands. Without fail, all the major jerky brands package their products in vacuum-sealed plastic sleeves with a resealable zipper across the top. These packages¹ are then displayed in stores from hangers, as well as traditional shelving.



In the quest to live up to the American Jerk moniker while also being environmentally sustainable, it was decided early on that American Jerk would go in a completely different direction with the package design.

Once this had been established, wood was decided on as the media almost immediately. The box shape was chosen as the shape shortly after, if only because resealable bags made out of wood are not currently a feasible form of packaging.

The wooden box concept was strengthened by the recognition it could be useful in potential marketing campaigns. For example, the argument could be made that the American Jerk wood box maintains the wood-smoked flavor of the beef better than the bagged competition. A wooden box could also have been something that the Old West character of the Jerk would have carried around in a saddlebag; vacuum-sealed plastic sleeves with resealable zippers had not yet been created at that time.

¹ Images (L to R) from gruub.com, printablecouponsanddeals.com, and dealfindingchik.net

In a detour from the Old West theme, balsa wood was chosen to be the primary material of the box. While balsa wood does not have the permanence or Old West connotations of other timbers – such as oak, almond, or pine – balsa wood has several advantages: it is the softest hardwood, known for being extremely lightweight while maintaining its strength. It is harvested from the large, fast-growing Balsa Tree (right²), or *Ochroma pyramidale*, which reaches maturity much more rapidly than many of its counterparts.



Choosing balsa wood was the first step in creating a sustainable package for American Jerk jerky. It was decided that when being produced, biomimicry – or “the copying or imitation of a natural phenomenon’s or environment’s efficiency and survival mechanisms in manufacturing processes or in applied case-based reasoning”³ – would be used extensively to minimize the environmental impact of the product.

With biomimicry in mind, the glue used to attach pieces of the box during its production will be based on the natural adhesive abilities of the blue mussel. This adhesive is soy-based and formaldehyde-free, and created specifically for wood products⁴. A third element of biomimicry has to do with maintaining the freshness of both the jerky itself and the wood that holds it. The jerky is preserved in the usual way, with smoke and salts. The wood, however, is preserved by a thin layer of paper-like material, which coats the inside of the box. This is based on the nests of paper wasps, which are made of wood and hardened saliva⁵.



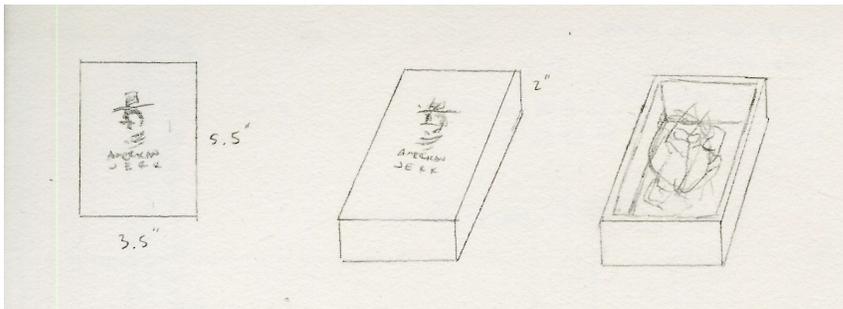
² Image from Mike Chilson’s rcscalebuilder.com tutorial, “All About Balsa.”

³ Definition found at dictionary.reference.com/browse/biomimicry

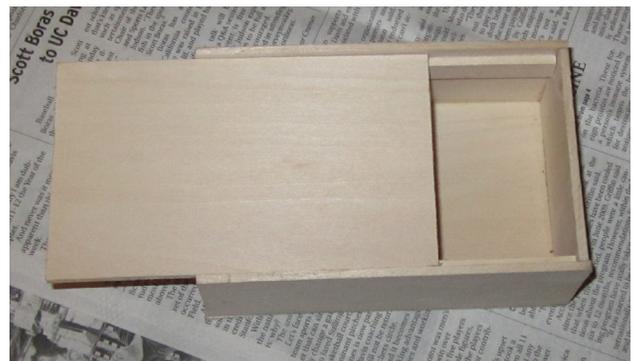
⁴ Information found at www.asknature.org/strategy/1052eed7fd56c4933871c04b65b1cafb
Photo by Sarah Nuehring.

⁵ Information found at www.asknature.org/strategy/13ca7e26c11d0ab777f3fce1a1ff36a7
Photo by Dan Leiberman.

The 3.5-inch wide by 5.5-inch tall dimensions of the box were decided upon after measuring jerky samples from other companies. This width and height formed an area that was deemed large enough to contain all but the largest pieces of jerky. Initially, the depth of the box was 2-inches, and this thickness was used throughout the creation of sketches and paper mock-ups.

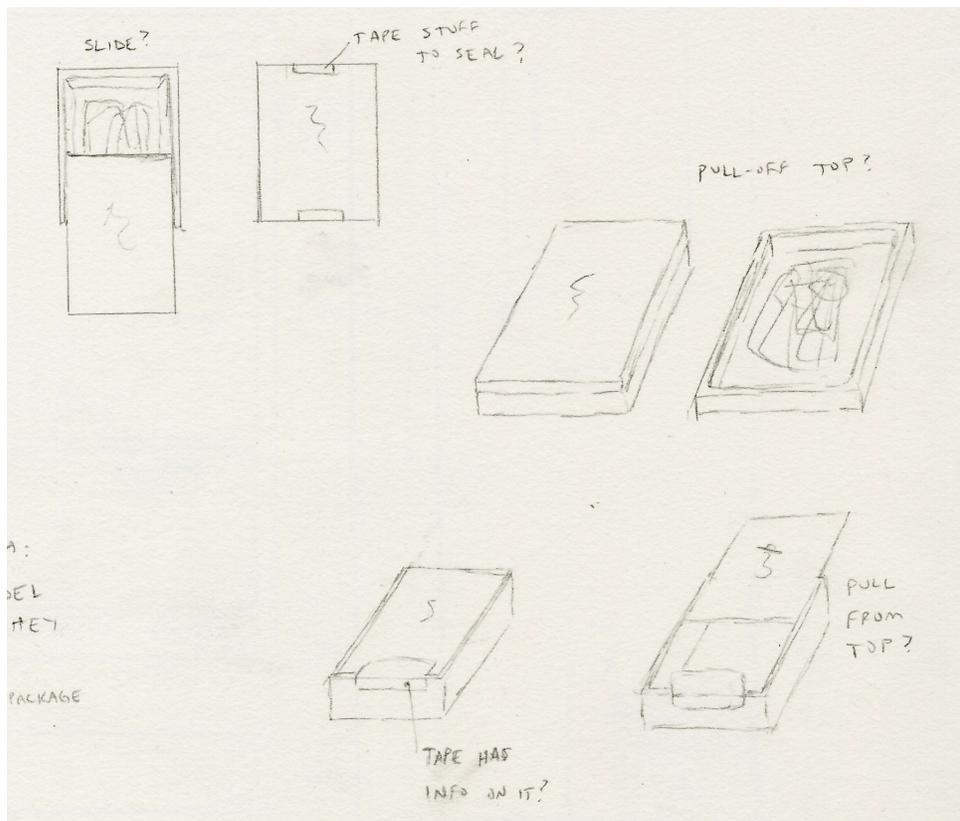


However, after building the first wooden mock-up, it was realized that it was slightly too thick. The depth was adjusted and ultimately ended up being 1.75-inches thick.



Packaging Side View: Original Box on Left, Final Box on Right.

One of the final decision points regarding the design of the American Jerk packaging was choosing to use a slide-open top as compared to a pull-off top.



The slide-open option was chosen because, again, it returns to biomimicry. It is a concept loosely based on the combination of various natural occurrences, such as the ability to open and close when pressure is applied, exhibited by the Venus flytrap⁶, and the ability to extend and contract, as seen when spiders pump fluid into their legs before jumping⁷.



⁶ Information found at www.asknature.org/strategy/35465c3fef5591856f2fe1032e870ce1

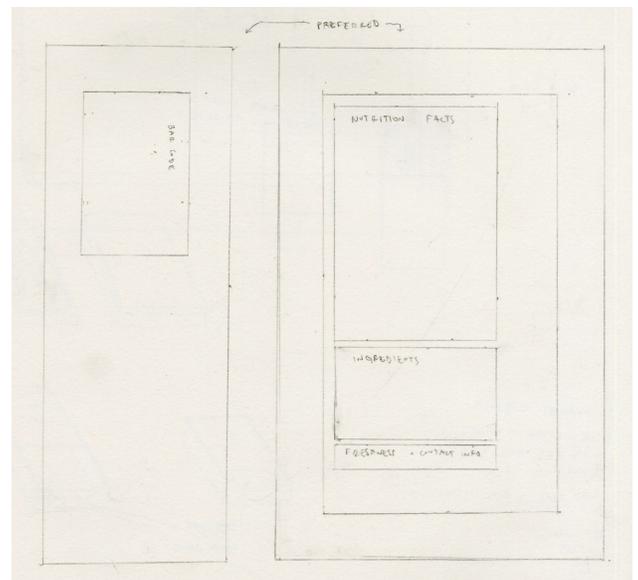
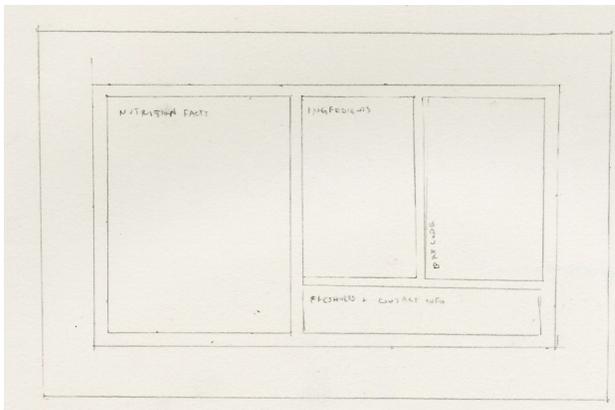
Photo by Stefano Zucchinali.

⁷ Information found at www.asknature.org/strategy/d33d113f9f62c63f8f6bc6a607b03a4c

The slide-open function required a final element that the pull-off top did not: a mechanism to seal the slide-top to the rest of the box. It seemed clear that a small piece of tape would best serve the purpose of keeping the top in place and preserving freshness. In keeping with the vein of biomimicry and sustainability, it was decided to use gecko tape, which can clean and reseal itself.



Finally, to create the labels and icons found on the back and front of the box, I returned to the research stage and took note of what jerky competitors featured on their bags. The Nutrition Facts, UPC code, net weight, freshness seals, and other accountability information were all created and attached to the box. I experimented with the layout of this information and settled on placing the UPC code on the side of the package. This freed up space on the back of the package and reduced the cluttered feeling.



When I moved to making computer versions of all the information, I also wrote a background story for the American Jerk himself. This story of the Jerk was added to the side of the box, for promotional purposes, and to add an element of fun, which had been missing or lost amid all the serious information on the package.

Nutrition Facts
 Serving Size: 1 oz (28g)
 Servings Per Container about 6

Amount per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 25mg	8%
Sodium 380mg	16%
Total Carbohydrate 7g	2%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 11g	22%

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%
 Calcium 0% • Iron 8%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

INGREDIENTS: BEEF, BROWN SUGAR, WATER, SOY SAUCE (WATER, WHEAT, SOYBEANS, SALT), CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, SALT, MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE, SODIUM TRIPOLYPHOSPHATE, HYDROLYZED SOY GLUTEN PROTEIN, ONION POWDER, GARLIC POWDER, SODIUM ERYTHORBATE, CITRIC ACID, SPICE EXTRACTIVES, DISODIUM INOSINATE, SODIUM NITRATE.
CONTAINS: WHEAT & SOY

AMERICAN JERK
 Orless Hall, California Ave
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 www.americanjerk.com
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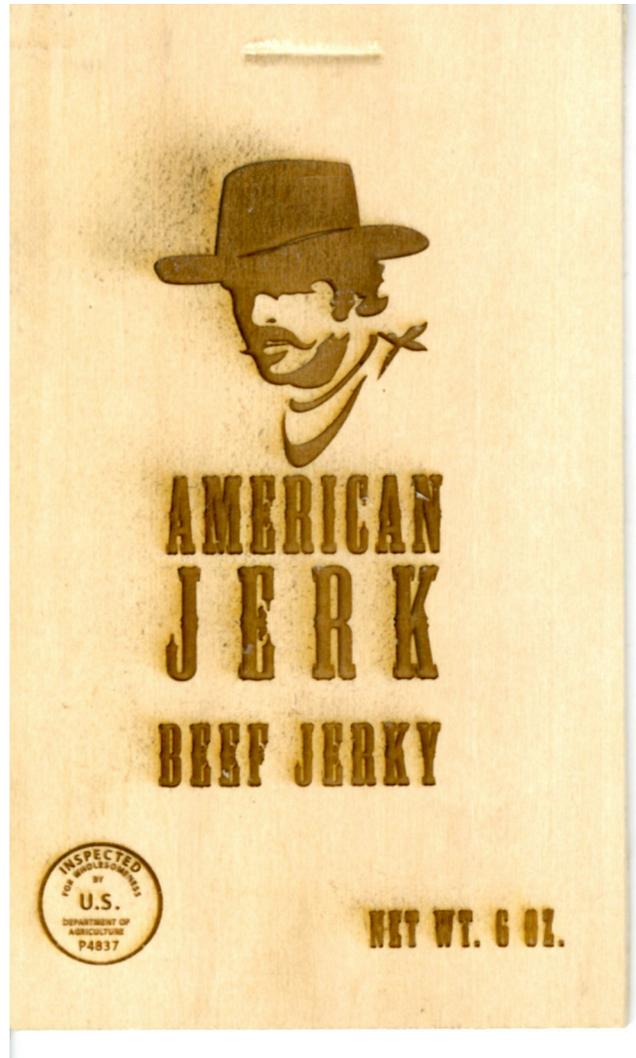
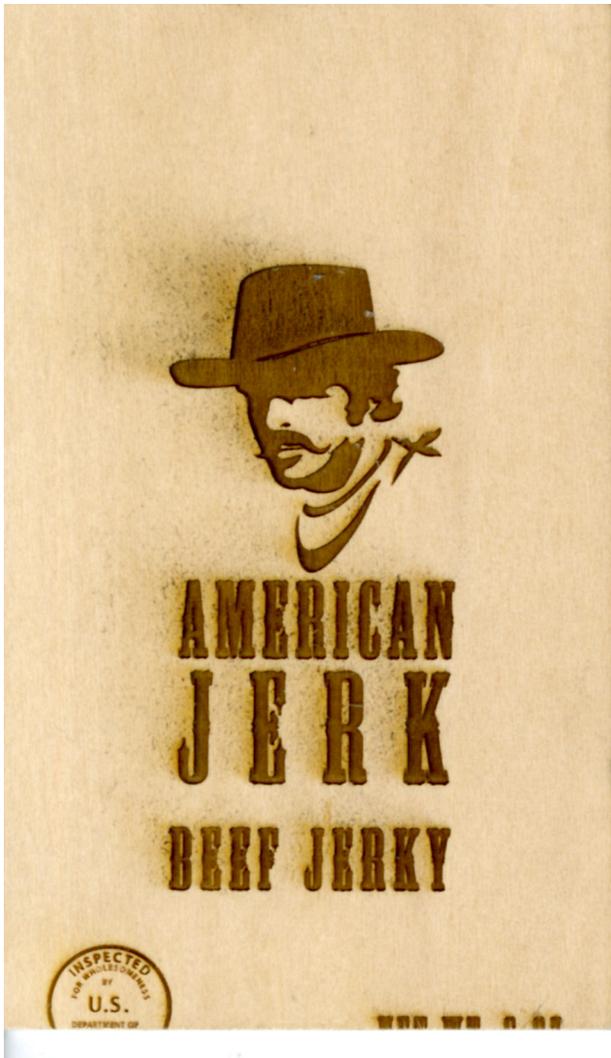


FOR MAXIMUM FLAVOR AND FRESHNESS, CONSUME OR REFRIGERATE WITHIN 7 DAYS OF OPENING.
 MADE IN THE USA



BEEF He was feared by outlaws, ignored by lawmen, and respected by all. He barely spoke, and his moustache and scowl were permanent features on his face. He did not carry a gun. He didn't need to. No one had a beef with the American Jerk. No. But he had beef for everyone.

To give the effect that the American Jerk logo was branded into the top, a laser engraving was required. The engraving took two attempts, but otherwise the assembly went smoothly, with the correct American Jerk packaging as the result.



The actual assembly of the box was relatively simple. It only required balsa wood, a way of protecting the wood from jerky oil, a saw – in this case one from X-acto – and glue. Some experimentation was required during assembly, and the steps I used and my thought process are visible in the pictures below (read left to right, then down).



